

1 Mark A. Freestone

Tape #213

Interviewed by E. Joseph Winder, 5 June 1989, Vernal Utah.

Mark Freestone (Mark): They called him Patch Eye, you probably remember him, he used to come here to Vernal quite a lot and he had a patch over one eye. They called him Patch Eye. Ha-ha.

Joseph Winder (JW): You herded sheep for about how many years?

Mark: For about two years as I recall, about two years.

JW: Is that about the time you got married?

Mark: No. After that I came down and worked in the timber for Feltch again for quite a while.

JW: Now, they had this electric sawmill, didn't they?

Mark: That was that one that's right out in Ashley Ward against the hill.

JW: And they'd get their logs out up there and then...

Mark: They'd haul the logs down. Feltch got a big four-wheel drive truck and then he started to get good loads of lumber off. They hauled them for Freddy Feltch, and those guys used to haul them off the mountain with team and wagon for years and years, you know. But he got that big old truck and he could bring more in one load than they could bring in a week.

JW: He was quite an enterpriser, Mr. Feltch.

Mark: Oh, yeah.

JW: His boys were ambitious.

Mark: Yes, they were. They were good. Old Fred was an industrious, inventive sort of a guy, you know, and he liked the timber business. He liked to work in the timber. Everybody got along good with him. I never heard anybody have a bad word to say about Fred Feltch. He's all right.

JW: In the forties you were still here in Vernal, weren't you?

Mark: Yeah. Lois and I got married in '41. When did the war start, forty-one? Forty-one, in the fall of '41 we got married. See I'd been home from a mission for seven or eight years before I got married. That would have been a poor time for some people to get married because there was nothing to do. No work, no nothing. You know as well as I do about that part of it. Things

weren't too good, but we got along good. What we did have, we appreciated it, you know, and everything you acquired in those days amounted to something. Everything.

JW: Oh, yes. A dollar...

Mark: A dollar or an old settin' hen on the nest, you know. Everything amounted to something. I remember when we were up on Diamond and Mother used to get on her horse and she'd ride down to Brush Creek, down to Uncle Lou's place to get a settin' of eggs. They had some Buff Washington chickens down there and they'd get a settin' of eggs and put them in a lard bucket with some oats, you know, pack 'em in oats and she'd ride up there, five or six miles up there and set those eggs under one of our chickens and raise some good chickens. Like I say, everything amounted to something that you had. Whether it was cattle, chickens or whatever it was, it meant something. It isn't like it is now.

JW: We used to live on a cream check. That's about all the cash we had. We'd get along, you know.

Mark: Well, that was in the days when your light bill was a dollar and a-half or two dollars a month.

JW: Telephone about the same.

Mark: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Tell me something now: you were neighbors to Jack and Old Lady Dick?

Mark: Yeah, Dad helped them locate their ground and one thing and another. They come up here from Louisiana and filed on that ground down there and started to farm. They were pretty good people for a long time, but they as neighbors... In years after that it turned out that they were kind of treacherous.

JW: Just common-law wife.

Mark: Oh yeah. She was supposedly, and I guess she was, a graduate nurse. Then they filed on that ground up there and kept it for a while and then they went over in Greendale, over in Lewis Island, and then they used to live over there sometimes, too. Dad always got along with them fine and helped them all he could, but they... As friends and neighbors they didn't pan out as good as everyone else did up there on the mountain. They used to have lots of dogs: they had hound dogs, they had bull dogs, they had every kind of a dog on earth. Five or six dogs all the time down there. You couldn't get to their house and you could hear them howl all over Diamond Mountain. When they'd start to howl, you know.

JW: Were you up there at the time of this entanglement?

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Mark: Old Tom McEachnie and Kine Hatch? That time, I wasn't there. I think that happened when I was working up in Colorado or somewhere. Dad told me about it afterwards. That's when Old Jack shot into the sheep wagon at night with a shotgun.

JW: They had their lantern a goin'...

Mark: They blew it out and then they shot.

JW: They escaped further injury, but McEachnie got hurt pretty bad.

Mark: I think some shot hit him in the head or something. I don't think it was serious, but I think Gene Long was with him. Gene Long was in the wagon with him when they shot in there, but it was at night and they were just... They would claim that the sheep had been on them or trespassing. They were trouble hunters, you know, about stuff all the time. I don't know, maybe some of their sheep did get on them a little bit, but they didn't attack them 'til after night and then they shot them with a shotgun. But I wasn't there at that time. Dad told me about it when I come home. Think I was up in Colorado then. I'm sure I was. That was their undoing. They left the country soon after that. I think they had a trial, arrested them and had a trial. Took them out to Provo or somewhere and had a trial.

JW: Up in Manila, I'm not sure.

Mark: Well, they had them out to Provo once and then they weren't here anymore after that and they finally went back to Florida or wherever they were.

JW: They just gave them that option then.

Mark: Yeah, they kind of had their choice of leaving the country or going to jail or something. As good neighbors, they didn't pan out as the rest of the people did around there.

JW: Tell me about John Louie Siddoway. Now, he had a quite a lot of property up there.

Mark: Yeah, he had quite a lot of property.

JW: And he had a threshing machine?

Mark: No, not John Louie. The one that had the thrashin' machine on the farm, is that the one you're talking about? Well, that wasn't the John Louie that was Wallace's and Ralph's brother. This was another. I think they were cousins or something, wasn't they? Old William H. Siddoway? He was a bachelor and he had an old steam engine thrashin' machine and old portable engine. You had to pull it with horses wherever you went and he got that thing up there and we'd go down there and help him thrash with that old thing.

I remember one time, he had me haulin' water to keep that cussed old boiler goin' out of a spring there and every time the water'd get low and I couldn't get back to that barrel full of water, why he'd have to shut it down a minute 'til I could get back, pullin' the barrel on an old lizard (?) and bailin' it in with a bucket out of the spring and pullin' an old lizard. Old Jack

Siddoway would come and put the intake hose in and suck up in there and then he'd cuss and pound it a little bit around and stuff like that and get it to goin' and about two or three slurps and it would suck that barrel dry and then I'd have to race to the spring for more water. [Laughter.]

Dad raised a good patch of lucern seed one time and we hauled it down from our place down there to Old Jack's and he thrashed it down there in that old separator and that was when I got my initial experience of that water deal and that cussed old engine.

JW: Well now, he owned land right on the face there, didn't he? The Searles?

Mark: Yeah, it was right on the right hand side as you are going north. He owned that land down in there and Ern Eaton had sixty acres right in there where Ray Searle's place is there, then Siddoway had the rest. He had quite a little piece of ground there. I don't know how much he had, but he had a pretty good piece of ground there.

JW: Jack Gert was up north of there.

Mark: Jack Gert and ? were up there. Well, it was north of where that road goes to Jones Hole now, up in that country towards the Blair Basin. They both had homesteads up in there. Dad helped them locate there. They came over the Baldies from Evanston, Wyoming, and they came over into this country with two pack animals, on foot. They had two little pack animals and the little mare had a colt and they followed them up over the Baldies from Evanston, Wyoming, and right up over and down there and made their acquaintance with Dad and he helped them locate their farms. [Laughter.]

JW: He was a character and a half, that Jack Gert.

Mark: Oh, yeah.

JW: A worker man.

Mark: Jack was a good worker, too. They stayed up there all winter, him and old Jack both. They were good carpenters and good painters and they built them a cabin up there and they stayed up there in the winter, too, you know. I remember one winter Earl come down, he got on a pair of skis and he come down off the mountain and he said he had cabin fever up there, the winter was getting too long. He come downtown and worked for a while 'til spring. Then he went back up and he started to farm, but I think he left Old Jack up there 'til spring.

JW: Now, did they have a little herd of sheep?

Mark: No, they were strictly farmers. They didn't have any sheep. It was all farm with them.

JW: Raising grain?

Mark: Yeah, they raised grain and that bromus grass when that bromus grass first came into vogue, you know. It was a good thing, and they raised a lot of grass seed for a year or two. I helped them cut it and they cut it with a grain binder.

JW: That was a fine seed and they had to thresh it out.

Mark: They cut the draft down and ?? it down some way on that old thrasher, so that it wouldn't blow it all out, see, and they'd thrash that out. But they had to be careful because it would blow over on them, see.

JW: It used to be, when I first went up on Diamond, that they didn't have those fences there and you just come to the top of the mountain and head for Diamond Spring.

Mark: Oh, yeah. Oh, you could go anywhere then on those old roads, those old sheep camp roads is all there were. You didn't have to dodge any fences then. You could go right straight up and down by that old Buckle Spring and down Diamond Spring and on wherever you wanted to go.

JW: It seemed like there was a fence there on the north side of ... And there was an old cabin there. Well, there were two cabins, on the north side, then the springs the Davises were running.

Mark: The Davises owned part of that. I think that cabin that's still sitting there belonged to Golden Slaugh, on the left hand side of the road. I think that old cabin is still there. I saw it a while back and I think that belonged to Golden Slaugh. He had a filing in there, but I don't know what the outcome was on that. I don't think they did any farming much or anything. Then there was George Slaugh. Old Uncle George, he was interesting. They had some ground up in there somewhere and John T. Glines and old Billy Dillman and all those.

JW: Theodore Johnson.

Mark: Theodore Johnson, A. Theodore, R.H. Sainsbury. You know, all those guys, they took to it after Dad started to farm up there. They all took to it and started farming. They raised a little stuff.

JW: Theodore had some hay there.

Mark: He had eighty acres of lucern up there.

JW: I went up one year to help them haul hay.

Mark: Yeah, he had a pretty good patch of that lucern there.

JW: Just dry land?

Mark: Yeah, but, you know, that lucern, I don't know if there's any of it left, but that patch of lucern lived for fifty years there. There may be a little of it around yet.

JW: I wouldn't be surprised.

Mark: He had eighty acres. He plowed that whole eighty and put it into alfalfa. I've seen some good crops of hay on that for dry land.

JW: We gathered up, I don't know, quite a few loads for somebody up there in the spring.

Mark: Some of those sheep men would buy it and then when Theodore would come up early in the spring to plow, he'd have to feed his horses, too, you know. Oh, he'd have to feed the plow horses, and I imagine they'd eat quite a bit of that. It was quite a farm up there. It was quite a bustle up there within that dry farming business for quite a long time.

JW: Well now, Ray Searle, where was his homestead? Ray's father? Was that up at Blair Basin?

Mark: No, he didn't have a homestead up there. His dad didn't. He didn't have a homestead up there. Now, it was after he was killed, I guess, no, I can't remember exactly, but she had that filing up to Blair Basin. No, she had that filing north of Dad's place up there. Up there is where she had it. Some of the Battys own that place now.

JW: Paul, I suppose.

Mark: Some of the others, they own it up in there. That's where she had her filing, but Ray didn't. I don't think he ever filed on a homestead. That was after he was killed that she filed on that, see?

JW: Oh, I see.

Mark: She could file on it. It was a widow's filing. They used to call it the widow's cabin up there. Yeah, up there in those ?? roads up there.

JW: Then what did he...

Mark: He just bought it. He didn't file on any ground.

JW: It seemed like they had some holdings up there in the Blair Basin.

Mark: They did. They did and Ray has it. Ray and Jay have that piece of ground over in Blair Basin and they still have it.

JW: That land down... Randy Searle, has he bought up some land there at ?? and over into...

Mark: Yeah, well, I think he bought that. He might have bought that from some of the Cooks.

JW: Orson Calder used to own that.

Mark: Yeah, Old Orson used to own that and Zelf had that. He had a lot of ground.

JW: Zelf had a lot of ground there. North of ?? Spring and out west of ?? and the Outlaw ?? and that's where I first got introduced into the mountain and my dad, you know him?

Mark: Yeah.

JW: And George Julius was ?? . It was a good experience for me.

Mark: Oh, I'll bet it was.

JW: Even after school was started actually.

Mark: You was up there anyway, huh?

JW: I remember the horse ran away and we had Mentzers' horse, that big old bally horse of Mentzers and another gray one. They were both good-sized horses. We started back home that first night and I had to go afoot for about three or four miles and I caught up with them. Then I had to crawl up onto that big old horse and up his leg.

Mark: Oh, yes. I guess you wish you'd've gone to school. Speaking about school, you know, oh, I used to detest that having to come down off the mountain for school in the fall. It just ruined the summer for me thinking about going to school. Until we got up in high school, and then we were having lots of fun, but in that grade school, oh, I did hate to go to that school 'cause I despised to go to school.

JW: I always enjoyed school. It didn't bother me to miss a week of school to go up and bring the sheep down or something that way. I enjoyed that I got acquainted with...

?? Creek there where they have those reservoirs now. Why, ?? and Rex took up homesteads there.

Mark: Oh, did he?

JW: Down there at what they call Dead Horse Draw. It's kind of over toward Crouse Creek. Paul McCoy has the BLM. Rex never got proved up on it and

Mark: It reverted back.

JW: I was talking to Paul just recently and he said they have that Dead Horse Draw. Oh, I used to enjoy going up there in the summer and stay all summer and herd those sheep. That was my job after school was out. I'd just go up. They used to let school out a little earlier than they do now. The lambs would start to come early and ...

Mark: Criminy, yes, and haul them around and tie their mothers up.

JW: You'd get up there and all that green feed and they'd take after that. See the Stringhams got that land up the draw and Jackson Draw.

Mark: And Hackings had their holdings up in there, yeah.

JW: And Siddoways. They were mostly out on the face there, weren't they?

Mark: Well, they had some land. They had some holdings back in there. Wallace had some holdings back in Lanson (?) and back in that country. Yeah, they had sheep holdings all over there. Had quite a bit of land in there at that time.

JW: Each of those boys had a herd of sheep at one time?

Mark: Oh, yeah, they did, they did. At that time, they were wealthy people. They were the only people around that had a dime. Yeah, for a fact.

JW: When hard times hit, why pretty soon, they had a farmer loan on it.

Mark: And that took care of that.

JW: They would just allot them so much a month.

Mark: They put them on a budget, you know.

JW: And the Davises the same way.

Mark: Exactly the same way.

JW: They were terribly in debt. I guess that was the time when George finally pulled out of it.

Mark: Is there any of that Davis bunch alive?

JW: Let's see...

Mark: Is George still alive?

JW: Yes, I believe he is.

Mark: Well, he's about the only one.

JW: Clive died recently, but they did well when they moved down to California. See Clive ?? building the Oakland Temple. He got some property right across the road from it, built that motel in there and they just prospered. I don't know if he went into partnership with Clive. I think they had separate motels and so they were close together across from that temple. Of course, the LDS people come there and work in the temple.

Mark: Well, naturally, yeah.

JW: They had no trouble keeping that.

Mark: Well, I knew old George was alive because I knew all the rest of them were gone. The whole bunch. Did George have any family? I lost track of them.

JW: He married a Workman girl and they had four or five children. She died and he remarried.

Mark: Oh, did he?

JW: Yeah. The last I heard of George he was in Florence, Nebraska, in the Visitor Center, but they went there. There was a girl from Omaha, see, and my wife was in Omaha when I met her and she was born in Salt Lake City and had been back there for six years or so when I first went back to Omaha to work. I was working for the National Park Service when ??? about six years. About the time I was in the service, I made friends and this girl named Dee, was her first name, she made up with George. Florence, Nebraska. George and his wife were there.

Mark: I figured that that family was about dwindled out.

JW: He sure helped his sister out in Salt Lake that died. They were fine people.

Mark: Frieda was a Sainsbury. She was Laurie Sainsbury's daughter, wasn't she?

JW: Yeah.

Mark: Are they sisters?

JW: Yeah. One married Clive and the other ????. They were hard working. That is what made Clive succeed, was his wife.

Mark: I can believe that.

JW: They started out buying that hotel right there where the Coltharp home was converted into a hotel, and Clive and his wife, they had their own school all the time. That's when Clive...

Mark: I knew they were interested in something down there. Somebody told me that George was in the motel business down there.

JW: He is in California still, down that way somewhere. Oh, there have been a lot of great people.

Mark: Lots of them, lots of them.

JW: They made pretty good.

Mark: Well, they did. Like I say, they are the only people that had a dime.

JW: Yeah.

Mark: The rest of us... You know, Joseph, we were well off. We didn't ever suffer.

End

